



# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, March 7. 1693

Gentlemen,

Quest. 1. **Y**ou may remember that about a Year since there was a Case put to you in the manner following, (*viz.*) Suppose I have a Brother about 20 years of Age, and a Daughter about the same Age, and they so engaged in their Affections to each other, that they must Marry, or be ruined, and thereupon your advice was desired whether they might marry or not, who gave it in the Negative, with many places in Scripture to ground your Answer upon, by which means it remains as then: One party growing thoughtful, whether what you alledg'd will be dispens'd with, or not; the other of the Opinion that Christ put an end to the Law, and thereby this Matter may be compleated without any fear of Gods displeasure; and for the Laws of England, if no Person is wronged by it, why should any be concern'd at it: Now if you can encourage, it would be welcome News; but if the contrary, and supposing them to have made solemn Promises to marry them or none: Query, How then do you advise them to proceed to, and with each other the rest of their Lives, and yet be just and honourable?

Ans. We are still of the same Judgment. Our Saviour came to fulfill the Law, not put an end to it, that was only the Ceremonial part. — As for their future Carriage to one another, We think that they are absolutely free, and may dispose of themselves as they please, for all unlawful Obligations are void at the same time they are made, which is all we can further offer in the Matter.

Quest. 2. Thro' the Pious, Vertuous, and Witty Constitution of a Young Gentlewoman who is marry'd, I am so enamour'd, that were she single, she should be the only she I would attempt to get to be my Spouse, but as she is marry'd, I would not for the World attempt any thing to endanger her or my own Soul, or the Reputation of our Body; I cannot well avoid seeing of her daily: Now I would desire you to deal Ingeniously by me, for I am real, whether I sin in the said Love, and how? whether it be a breach of any of Gods Commands; and if so, how to avoid it?

Ans. All inordinate Affection is a Sin, and you may know whether your Respect for her makes you uneasie, and disturb'd; if so, you have exceeded the just bounds, and ought to remember that Precept, *Thou shalt not Covet thy Neighbours Wife*. No doubt we may lawfully have a greater esteem for one Person above another, tho' under the Circumstances of another Mans Wife; but then there's need of a great deal of Prudence in the management of it, that it gives no occasion of Jealousy, nor grows immoderate in our selves, nor influences the party to withdraw her Affections from her Husband, with many more ill consequences which often attend such Actions: So that its much safer to avoid what is lawful in many Cases, than by the use of our liberty become Offenders.

Quest. 3. I desire your Sentiments of the following Relation, being true in fact. Some years since I had the Curiosity, with several others to go to see a Bell cast: The Furnace was made in a great Barn, the Fire newly kindled, fill'd the Barn with Smoak, which made several of the By-standers Sick, amongst the rest, as soon as the Mettal began to run, I found my self extreame Sick, going to the great doors of the Barn to suck in a little Air, I dropt down; the People cryed out there was one founded away, which I very well heard, and was enquiring, as I thought, with the rest which it was, at last the People said it was I, and named my Name, nay thought I, you are very much mistaken, for tho' I was very lately sick, yet I never was

so well as just now in all my Life, for I was in more Felicity than this World could afford, or I can Express, but in a quarter of hour I found my self carried into the adjoining Field in the midst of a great throng as sick as Heart could hold, but care being taken, I was well next Morn: Your Thoughts of my perfect hearing in so deep a Swoon, and of that inexpressible Joy and Ease, it will Oblige your humble Servant, &c.

Ans. We must beg your pardon, if we think that there's more Mirth than Truth in this Relation. If you are in Earnest, and believe what you say to be true, We suppose the whole was only a Dream. If you would convince us of the contrary, we expect the Circumstances of Persons and Place, and then we shall endeavour to return you an Answer, for 'tis not our business to study the reasons of things that are not.

Quest. 4. I presumed some time since to crave your Advice in a Case that almost distracts me, but am so unhappy as either not to be believed, or to be thought troublesome and impertinent. If you did but know, Gent. what a wretched Condition I am in, you would not certainly be so unkind as to deny my Request, for I am the most miserable Creature in the whole World: My Parents still continue so cruel as daily to command me not to discover my Love; nay, they plainly tell me, that if I do, they will never look upon me more, and yet I fear if it be not done, I must dye for it.. Dear Gent. pity me, and (if it be not very unadvisable) let me know your Thoughts what Course is best to take. I know not what solid Arguments in my perplexed Case you wise Athenians may have against obliging a poor distressed Virgin with your Advice, but deny it me not, I most humbly beseech you, if it be any way convenient to grant it?

Ans. The best Method we know of, is this, if your own Entreaties won't prevail, make use of the Interest of some of your Friends; and if nothing is yet to be done, avoid Solitariness, read History, (nothing Amorous) use much Company, but that which is innocent, and never indulge your self to think of your Passion when alone: And what is yet the best Remedy, be frequent in your Devotions, and beg a quiet peaceful Mind, and this Method can't fail, tho' the many Artifices and tricks of Ovid, and other Masters in Love Affairs often prove successless.

Quest. 5. I am a Young Woman that have been very Dutiful to my Parents, and have ever thought it my Duty so to do, but now they have proposed a Match for me whom I cannot Love, therefore I humbly desire your advice, how I shall discharge my Duty, whether to disoblige my Parents, and live an uncomfortable Life (for I can propose no other where Minds are not equally agreed) or to disoblige them by refusing what they so earnestly importune me to. This is real matter of Fact, therefore I desire your speedy answer?

Ans. As a Child can't lawfully dispose of it self without the Consent of its Parents; so on the other side, we don't understand that the Parents can marry their Children without their Consent. Indeed a Duty to our Parents, and the Respect we should have for their Judgments, should be of more weight in this Affair, than a Childish unreasonable Fancy, and which in all probability will be the Ruine of the Person that Entertains it: Tho' on the contrary, where 'tis pure Covetousness, or some unaccountable Humour, (and there are some such Instances) that is the Motive in the Parents; We think the many unhappy Examples that have been in such Matches, should prevail with 'em against such Injunctions; and We think it no Undutifulness in Children to deny their Compliances, after all Just Methods, by the Intercession of Friends and Intreaties



to the contrary: There's no greater a Barbarity in Nature than Unequal Mathes, the *Mines* and *Gallies* are Trifles to it in this Life, and it too often is the Earnest of worse hereafter.

Quest. 6.

"I Have a far greater Passion (My Dear Patient) to know how you are than when I was in Town; tho' you was then my first Thoughts: Think well of this Trouble, since we all Naturally Love to please our selves, and this is the way to Extract a great Proportion of my Satisfaction from you. I Writ to you as I came through ( ) which I hope you receiv'd, that I might by the last Post have an Account of your Health: I was so sure of a Letter from you, tho' it came not to ( ) that I sent to the Post-Office in ( ) I shall Value my self at no small rate if I can outdoe you in Friendship, whom all else come so far short of: I gave your Token to my Mother, with much less Pleasure than I receiv'd it. I would be very sorry you Wanted your Nurse at the rate I do you: Attracting Conversation, the Knowledge of which is all that makes me not Repent my Coming from *Scotland*. I am afraid I shall force you to Wish, by troubling you thus frequently, my Esteem was as remote from you as the Spark would have his Ladies Constancy and Virtue: If I be capable of Gratitude and generous Friendship, there is but one kind of Relation in the World can give you more than you do most firmly possess from

Dear ( )

Yours for Ever, if I be —

P O S T S C R I P T.

"My Service to ( ) I Wish you a Merry *Christmas*, and Forty good *New Years*. I am afraid you are not Careful of your self, nor my Maid to get you what you can Eat. I am Angry at this silly Concern that brought me hither, 'till you was perfectly Well. You never slept less when your Illness was at the worst, than I have done since I parted from you, which is now three Weeks. I had one remarkable Slumber made pleasant by a Dream of you; I saw you in your best Night-Gown, and your Face was as red as the Lining of it: Have a Care of a Dose of Claret this *Christmas*: I alwayes Interpret my own Dreams, especially when I Dream of my best Friends, and you are so.

Now Gentlemen, You are desir'd to give your Opinions, which way the Gentleman should take this Letter, for a Letter of Friendship or Love? He is at a great loss, and desires your speedy Answer, being an Old Beau, and not willing to Disoblige that Sex, let them be of what sort they will, from the Chamber-maid to the Lady.

Ans. w.

'Tis very strange that a Gentleman of that Character should be at a loss for Answer: We rather judge that there is some other Design at the bottom than what is pretended to us. The Character the Gentleman has been pleas'd to bestow upon the Lady we have Omitted, for upon a supposition that the whole is true, We think it Punishment enough that she had the ill Judgment of Choosing such a Friend. Our Opinion of the wole is this, that either the Lady had only a mind to be Merry, and try her Talent in Compliment, or that her Friendship was Generous and Honest, being built upon Appearances of Merit: If the Gentleman will take our Advice, which his repeated Importunities have Wrested from us, let him send this Paper to her and beg her Pardon, if he has not taken a Method agreeable to her Merit, and the Pretensions of an Old Beau, that would not Disoblige any of her Sex, from the Chamber-maid to the Lady.

Quest. 4. I have often observ'd you give your Judgment of Books when required: I have heard of a Book entituled, The Humours and Conversations of the Town, and would desire your Opinion of it?

Ans. w. We can't recommend it for Piety, or Good

Morals; tho' there's a great deal of Wit in it, some very just Satyrs, and so far answers the Title, that we believe it wrote by one, who has had his share both in the Knowledge and Practice of the Subject.

There is going to the Press a Work Entituled *THE LADIES DICTIONARY*, which will contain *Answers* (Alphabetically digested) to all the most Nice and Curious *Questions* sent concerning Love, Marriage, the Behaviour, Dress and Humours of the Female Sex: As also *Answers* to whatever entertaining *Questions* else are sent concerning our *English Virgins*, *Wives*, *Widows*, or the Fair Sex in general. This *Love Dictionary* when finish'd, will serve as a Directory to the *Ladies* and *Batchellors* upon all Occasions. This Work will be Publish'd about the 20th. of *April* next, all *Ladies* and *Batchellors* therefore that have any thing very Curious by 'em upon any of the *forementioned Heads*, are desired speedily to send it to *Smith's Coffee-House* in *Stocks-Market*, Directed For the Undertaker of the *LADIES DICTIONARY*.

Advertisements.

The Second Volume of The Post-Boy robb'd of his Mail, or the Pacquet broke Open: To which are added several Ingenious Letters lately sent by several Gentlemen and Ladies to the Persons Concern'd in this Frolick; as also Copies of those Private Letters that lately pass'd between — with Observations on each Letter. Price Bound 2 s. 6 d. Printed for J. Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry.

IN *Grays-Inn-lane* in *Plow-yard*, the third Door, lives Dr. Thomas Kirlens, a Collegiate Physician, and Sworn Physician in Ordinary to King Charles the Second, until his death; who with a Drink and Pill (hindring no Business) undertakes to Cure any Ulcers, Sores, Swellings in the Nose, Face, or other parts; Scabs, Itch, Scurfs, Leprosies, and Venereal Disease, expecting nothing until the Cure be finish'd: Of the last he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after Fluxing, which carries the evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and so destroys many. The Drink is 3 s. the Quart, the Pill 1 s. a Box, with Directions; a better Purger than which was never given, for they cleanse the Body of all Impurities, which are the causes of Dropsies, Gouts, Scurvies, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. With another Drink at 1 s. 6 d. a Quart. He cures all Fevers and hot Distempers without Bleeding, except in few Bodies. He gives his Opinion to all that writes or comes for nothing.